

**265<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

**Report**

*June 27, 2022*  
*ECO Secretariat*

## Report

The 265<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting was held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 under the chairmanship of the Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullayev, Republic of Uzbekistan. The meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives and representatives of Republic of **Azerbaijan**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyz Republic**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, Republic of **Tajikistan**, the Republic of **Türkiye**, **Turkmenistan**, and Republic of **Uzbekistan**. The ECO Secretary General and the relevant staff of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. List of participants is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

Prior to the CPR's formal proceedings, the ECO Secretary General requested the Council's attention to introduce the Secretary General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, His Excellency Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam who visited the ECO Secretariat to discuss the ECO-D8 cooperation within the scope of a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) signed in 2011.

The ECO Secretary General briefed the Council about his bilateral meeting with Ambassador Imam that touched on certain aspects of ECO-D-8 collaboration based on the existing MoU. He said that their meeting also explored the ways and means to make active engagements between the two organizations in identical areas of cooperation, and with a view to effectively implementing the said MoU that covers almost all issues of their common interest, including trade & investment, transport, energy, tourism etc.

The D-8 Secretary General extended his deep gratitude for providing him the opportunity to join the important session of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and present an overview of D-8 and its major areas of cooperation. The visiting dignitary mentioned that in view of the changing global landscape, the D-8 was looking into various possibilities to broaden the scope of their cooperative network and discover some new socioeconomic areas, most significantly, health, education as well as information and communication technology. He also underlined that D-8 had taken some important steps, including a visa agreement amongst the Member States aimed at boosting their intra-regional trade and economic activities, as well as the establishment of specialized agencies to support the specific facets of organization's agenda. Moreover, he conveyed that the D-8's initiative concerning the creation of an intra-regional financial system expected to be launched in the shape of '**visa card**' to settle payments amongst the member countries. In addition, the D-8 Secretary General also underscored the significance of meeting with his ECO counterpart that took place earlier in the day, expressing optimism about ECO-D-8 enhanced partnership based on the relevant provisions of their previously signed MoU.

The D-8 Secretary General was in Tehran as part of his official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran which is one of the import members of the D-8 organization. He was invited to visit the ECO Secretariat to discuss and deliberate the way forward for

activating ECO-D-8 cooperation, and attend the 265th Meeting of CPR as a Special Guest.

The **Chairman** while welcoming the participants formally initiated the proceedings of the meeting

### **Agenda Item No. 1**

#### Adoption of the Agenda

2. The **Council** adopted the following Agenda of the 265<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting for deliberation:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 265<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
3. Recommendations of the Brainstorming Session on reform process and prospects of cooperation in the ECO region held on May 23-24, 2022 at the ECO Secretariat
4. Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and 25<sup>th</sup> COM (*continued*)
  - Consideration for establishing the High-Level Expert Group proposed by the Republic of Uzbekistan
5. Approval of ECO Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services
6. Approval of ECO Guidelines for the Selection of Theme for the Specific Years in ECO Calendar
7. Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding"
8. Administrative matters:
  - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
9. Any other business
10. Date of the next CPR Meeting

### **Agenda Item No.2**

#### Adoption of the Draft Report of the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting

3. The **Council adopted** the draft report of the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/264<sup>th</sup> Meeting/2022/682 dated May 23, 2022.

### **Agenda Item No.3**

#### Recommendations of the Brainstorming Session on reform process and prospects of cooperation in the ECO region held on May 23-24, 2022 at the ECO Secretariat

4. The Brainstorming Session on reform process and prospects of cooperation in the ECO region on the level of relevant Deputies Foreign Minister of ECO Member States was conducted on May 23-24, 2022 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

5. The Session decided to finalize the Summary Report of the session through silence procedure. Accordingly, the Report of the Session was circulated among the Member States vide Note Verbale No. CFU/ECO Reforms/2022/700 dated May 26, 2022 and June 8, 2022, for its finalization. By the given deadline, the Secretariat was provided with the proposals from the Islamic Republic of **Iran** and the Republic of **Türkiye**, as well as the Republic of **Azerbaijan** that were circulated among the Member States vide Notes Verbale No. CFU/ECO Reform/2022/792 dated June 9, 2022 and No. CFU/ECO Reform/2022/794 dated June 12, 2022.

6. While reminding the previous deliberation during the first Brainstorming Session, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** underlined that various viewpoints and interventions were made by the distinguished deputy ministers and officials of the Member States, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the topics such as trade, transport and human resource policy of the Secretariat. He emphasised that it would be appropriate if the Secretariat provides the Member States with a comprehensive report containing viewpoints and interventions by each and every individual Member States. He considered that it would be more feasible if at the first phase Secretariat inserts the amendments/proposals made by the Member States in the revised version of Summary report, then the High Level Expert Group may discuss this issue in a length and later on CPR may approve it.

7. The **Council** considered the proposals made by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Türkiye**, and Republic of **Azerbaijan** and ensure to reflect it in the updated version of the Summary Record in precise and comprehensive manners. With regard to the coverage of the costs incurred for the accommodation and collateral costs that had been incurred for convening the Brainstorming session, the Council reached on the consensus to cover the requisite amount i.e. around 2000 USD from the Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF).

#### **Agenda Item No.4**

##### Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM (continued)

- Consideration for establishing the High-Level Expert Group proposed by the Republic of Uzbekistan

8. The Plan of Work on the proposals and initiatives of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, finalized by the 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting held on April 11, 2022, was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. PoW/2022/450 dated April 12, 2022.

9. The proposal of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** to establish a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) on preparation of specific proposals and recommendations for further improvement of the ECO activities, included in the mentioned Plan of Work was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/28 dated January 9, 2022.

10. The nomination of Representatives received from the Republic of **Uzbekistan**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, Republic of **Azerbaijan**, **Turkmenistan**, and the Kyrgyz Republic for the proposed HLEG and the same were circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Notes Verbale No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/176 dated February 15, 2022, No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/431 dated April 7, 2022, No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/574 dated May 5, 2022, and No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/754 dated June 5, 2022.

11. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** in Tehran via its Note Verbale No. ECO-7/28/2022-(A)/35 dated June 6, 2022 requested the Secretariat to share the Term of References (ToRs) of the High-Level Expert Group and other related details to proceed further in the matter. The same was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/823 dated June 15, 2022.

12. The **ECO Secretary General** while recalling the previous discussion on this issue highlighted the importance of this particular agenda item. He requested the rest of the Member States to share their nomination at the earliest. On Islamic Republic of Pakistan's request regarding the Term of References of the High-Level Expert Group, he suggested that the Secretariat may draft the Terms of References (ToRs), for its further approval from the CPR.

13. The **Council** settled deliberation on the consensus that Secretariat will draft the Terms of References (ToRs) in connection with the High-Level Expert Group and will share it among the Member States for its approval in the next Council of Permanent Representatives' (CPR) Meeting.

#### **Agenda Item No. 5**

##### Approval of ECO Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services

14. The ECO draft Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Services, reflecting the codified practices of the Secretariat, were circulated among the Member States in October 2019 for receiving their views vide Note Verbale No: LA. Procurement-Guidelines/2019/841 dated 07.10.2019. Subsequently, the Secretariat was provided with the views from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which were circulated among the Member States vide Notes Verbale No: LA/Procurement-Guidelines/2020/2, dated 06.01.2020 and No: LA/Procurement-Guidelines/2020/162 dated 27.02.2020. The amended draft Guidelines were circulated among the Member States vide Note Verbale No: LA/Procurement-2020/533 dated 07.10.2020. Adoption of the draft ECO Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Services was put on the Agenda of the 248<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR.

As per the decision of the CPR, the silence procedure was resorted to obtain approval of the COM with respect to the draft Guidelines (Note Verbale No: LA/Guidelines-Procurement/2020/770 dated 27.12.2020) which was broken by submission of fresh views from the Republic of **Türkiye** (Note Verbale No: LA/Guidelines-Procurement/2021/9 dated 05.01.2021). This was followed by receiving general observation and proposals from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (circulated by Secretariat's Note Verbale No: ADM/PER/2021/282 dated 09.03.2021).

15. The amended draft ECO Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services containing the views of the Member States were circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.LA/ECO Rules for Procurement/2022/148 dated February 13, 2022.

16. Accordingly, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** in Tehran has forwarded the amendments for incorporation in the Draft "ECO Rules of Procurement of Goods and Services" and circulated the same amongst the Member States vide Note Verbale No. LA/ECO Rules for Procurement/2022/717 dated May 31, 2022.

17. The **ECO Secretary General** and **Legal Advisor** briefed the Council about the proposal made by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. They informed that the proposals have been classified in two annexes: annex (i) contained fresh proposals to be inserted in the draft text; and annex (ii) regarding the previously shared amendments and proposals which have not been reflected in the draft clean text of the Rules of Procurement shared on February 13, 2022. As for the latter, the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran made an inquiry about the reason for non-reflection of the already shared views in the draft clean text. The **ECO Secretary General** further explained that the Secretariat provided the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran and other Member States with the explanation on the non-reflection of the proposed amendment in the draft clean text of Rules of Procurement through the Note Verbale No. LA/ECO Rules for Procurement/2022/722 dated June 1, 2022. It was also noted that in case of no objection as to the explanations given by the Secretariat on the reasons for non-reflection of the proposals in annex II of the Note Verbale of Pakistan, the said proposals will not be reflected in the final version of the ECO Secretariat's Rules of Procurement of Goods and Services. It was also brought to the attention of the Council that the proposals of Pakistan as reflected in annex I, with the exception of the proposed paragraph on "Language" will be inserted in the Rules of Procurement. The Council was further informed that some changes in the numbering of paragraphs will also take place in the final version of Rules of Procurement. The Council was also requested in case of no objection as to the new proposals of Pakistan the silence procedure might be initiated after two weeks from the date of circulation of the final version of the ECO Secretariat's Rules of Procurement of Goods and Services including the changes as said above.

18. Having no objection raised by any Member State, in this context, and as per the request of the Secretariat the **Council** concluded that after a two-week from the circulation of the final version of the ECO Secretariat's Rules of Procurement of Goods and Services including the proposed amendments as set out above the Secretariat

initiate a two-week silence procedure pertaining to this agenda item, to secure the COM's approval to this end.

### **Agenda Item No. 6**

#### Approval of ECO Guidelines for the Selection of Theme for the Specific Years in ECO Calendar

19. The declaration of 2022 as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" initiated by H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the Honourable President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit in the ECO Calendar and approved by COM through silence procedure (Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFS/ECO Years/2022/229 dated February 21, 2022), outlined the great importance of regional connectivity in the ECO region.

20. Based on discussions at the 260<sup>th</sup> (December 21, 2021) and 261<sup>st</sup> (February 7, 2022), Meetings of CPR regarding the issue of Declaration of 2022 as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" in ECO Calendar, the Secretariat drafted the Guidelines to regulate the procedure and circulated the same among the Member States vide its Note Verbale No. LA/Guidelines/2022/316 dated March 9, 2022, requesting the Member States to provide views and proposals on the said Draft.

21. The **ECO Secretary General** while recalling the previous discussion during the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting expressed that some proposals on amendments to the draft Guidelines were raised and the Member States were requested to provide the Secretariat with written amendments to the text in order to be reflected it in the draft Guidelines. As of the date of issuance of this draft annotation no feedback received from the Member States.

22. The Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** pointed out that during the previous discussion Islamic Republic of **Iran** had already highlighted its proposals and it is rightly reflected in the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR's Report. He reiterated that these proposals may be considered.

23. Keeping in view the importance of the matter and paucity of time, the representative of Republic of **Türkiye** suggested that the Secretariat may put the document in "Screen-Sharing" and all Member States may review the draft and propose amendments, in this regard. Accordingly, arrangements were made to share the draft document in the main screen and the draft was amended as per the proposals made by Member States in a "track change version".

24. The **Council** decided on the circulation of the draft ECO Guidelines in a track change version as well as in clean text as accepted at the Council amongst the Member States for obtaining approval of the Council of Ministers through silence procedure.

### **Agenda Item No. 7**

#### Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding"

25. Abandonment of the practice of dividing the Member States into "founding" and "non-founding" countries has been proposed during the 14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit Meeting by the Honourable President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In view of the foregoing, the Secretariat was tasked by CPR (254<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting) to develop a draft modalities on the implementation of the aforesaid suggestion. To facilitate the discussion and consideration of the issue the Secretariat prepared a background report on the use of the terms "founding" and "non-founding" and rotation of post of Secretary General and circulated it amongst the Member States through the Note Verbale No.LA/Report/2021/990 dated September 13, 2021.

26. The issue was put on the agenda of 25<sup>th</sup> COM Meeting held in Ashgabat on November 27, 2021 and the Council mulled over the proposal and tasked the CPR together with the ECO Secretariat to work out concrete proposals before the next Meeting of the COM, for addressing the issue regarding practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding".

27. The Permanent Representative of Republic of **Kazakhstan** informed that the Kazakhstan has forwarded three alternative proposals regarding the issue in question through Note Verbale No. 30/318 dated June 27, 2022. He was of the view that apart from these proposals the suggestions/ideas of other Member States will be more than welcomed. He showed his reservation while recalling the previous discussion during the last CPR regarding holding of informal meeting on the matter of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding".

28. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** and the representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** expressed their readiness to contribute actively to any efforts on working out concrete proposal based on the request made by the Republic of **Kazakhstan**.

29. The Permanent Representative of Republic of **Kazakhstan** suggested that since the issue is of sensitive nature it should not be finalized in hurry. He further suggested that the issue can be discussed informally and then be put before the CPR.

30. The **Council** reached on the decision that concerned Member States may hold informal meeting(s) at the level of Permanent Representatives/Ambassadors and submit the outcome to CPR. The **Council** further taking the possible unavailability of the Permanent Representative(s) deferred consideration of the issue at its meeting in September 2022.

### **Agenda Item No. 8**

#### Administrative matters:

##### - Recommendations of the Selection Panel

31. No issue was discussed under this sub-agenda item.



## **Agenda Item No. 9**

### Any other business

- Reimbursement of Airfare Cancellation Charges in respect of the Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan

32. The **Deputy Secretary General (Admin/EME/IR&IT)** briefed the council that the 8<sup>th</sup> ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting was scheduled in Islamabad from 06-09 June, 2022. He explained that the meeting was postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. The representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan has requested to reimburse the cancellation charges against the airfare. He underscored that the said event was included in the ECO Calendar of Events 2022 by the 32<sup>nd</sup> RPC Meeting and relevant decision of CPR adopted it. Besides, the meeting was in the list of Special Support Fund 2022 also adopted by the relevant decision of CPR meeting. However, empirically SSF is reimbursing the tickets of organized meetings.

33. The **Council** considered the reimbursement of airfare cancellation charges to be paid to the representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan by the Secretariat.

- Turkish Cypriot State, observer of ECO request to participate in 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting preceded by 6th High Level Experts Meeting on Agriculture

34. The **Deputy Secretary General (T&I/A&I)** informed that the Turkish Cypriot State, observer of ECO, has sent an official request (NV TRNC/2022/238129 on 25 May, 2022) to participate "7th ECO Ministerial Meeting preceded by 6th High Level Experts Meeting on Agriculture", which will be held on 5-6 July in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. He further elaborated that this request has been done in accordance with article "IV. Rights and Obligations" in ECO Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The aforementioned Modalities foresees:

*"An Observer may be invited to attend, without the right to vote, the inaugural and the closing ceremonies of the ECO meetings of Heads of State, Council of Ministers (COM), Regional Planning Council (RPC), and sectoral ministerial or high-level meetings upon invitation by the ECO Secretariat with prior consensus to be reached at the CPR, provided that remaining members choose to abstain and/or are not against the decision"*

35. Based on their request, the **Council** agreed for the extension of an invitation to the Turkish Cypriot State to participate in the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture to be held on July 6, 2022 in Tashkent as an "**OBSERVER**".

- Participation of the Member States in HLEM is required to be sponsored under Special Support Fund (SSF) as per criteria prescribed for ECO events

36. The **Deputy Secretary General (T&I/A&I)** informed that the ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture to be held in Tashkent on July 6, 2022 will be preceded by an High Level Experts Meeting (HLEM) on July 5, 2022, adding that participation of the Member States in HLEM is required to be sponsored under Special Support Fund (SSF) as per criteria prescribed for ECO events. He underlined that while the normal ceiling of each HLEM's participant appropriated for reimbursement of economy class airfare under SSF is US\$ 900/-, the maximum limit, in exceptional cases, for payment of tickets out of SFF is US\$ 1200/-. In this regard, he mentioned about the substantial increase in the airfares due to global inflationary trends. Relevantly, he referred two cases of the HLEM's participants from **Iran** and **Türkiye** whose air tickets cost will be about and under US\$ 1200/- that could be reimbursed under SFF with the discretionary approval of the Secretary General. However, he requested CPR's consideration on Pakistan's participation in the said HLEM's meeting that appears to bear US\$ 1700/- for the procurement of cheapest air ticket, which is exceeding the maximum limit for reimbursement of airfares under SFF.

37. The **Council** considered the recommendation made by the Secretariat and reiterated on the need to exercise maximum possible effort for buying the most economic ticket.

38. The issue of rotation of ECO Chairpersonship for the year 2023 based on the alphabetical order was also brought to the attention of the Council and it was noted that under the current ECO representation of the next Member State in alphabetical order the ECO Chairpersonship for the year 2023 will be handed over to Azerbaijan.

#### **Agenda Item No. 10**

##### Date of the next CPR Meeting

39. The Council may decide to convene its next (266<sup>th</sup>) Meeting **on July 25, 2022** at the ECO Secretariat.

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## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### **The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:**

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, Ambassador
- Mr. Subhi Ismayizada, Third Secretary

### **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:**

- H.E. Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Abolghasem Tahmasebi, Director, ECO and Multilateral & Economic Organization
- Mr. Behzad Azarsa, Senior Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation
- Ms. Shokoufeh Shadi, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation

### **The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:**

- H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay, **Ambassador**
- Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor

### **The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:**

- Mr. Akylbek Kylychev, Counselor

### **The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:**

- Ms. Khirat, First Secretary

### **The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

- Mr. Salohiddin Ismoilov, Attaché

### **The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:**

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counselor

### **The Embassy of Turkmenistan:**

- Mr. Atamyrat Bayramov, First Secretary
- Mr. Kemal Atayev, Third Secretary

### **The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, **Ambassador**
- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

### **The ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esper, Deputy Secretary General
- Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser